

Researchers have demonstrated that extracellular vesicles isolated from amniotic fluid stem cells can be used to effectively slow the progression of kidney damage in mice with a type of chronic kidney disease.

# California advises against keeping phone in pocket

The jury is still out on whether or not cellphone radiation is bad for you, but California's Department of Public Health (CDPH) isn't taking any chances.

The agency just issued an advisory that suggested residents should take steps to limit their exposure to cellphones, gadget, com reported.

The notice recommended avoiding phone use when unnecessary, particularly when the cell signal is likely to kick into over-drive (such as when you're in a weak coverage area or streaming video).

It also advises keeping your handset away from your body — CDPH Director Dr. Karen Smith even suggested that not keeping your phone in your pocket.

The advisory follows the release of CDPH findings from 2009, which were prompted by a lawsuit from University of California (UC) Berkeley professor Joel Moskowitz in his bid to explore possible links between cellphone use and increased risks of cancer.

He believes that cellphone radiation poses a 'major risk'.

Other agencies, such as Connecticut's own Department of Public Health, have put out similar recommendations.

The CTIA wireless industry



usatoday.com

group, which has historically opposed attempts to raise public concerns over phone radiation, isn't taking a definitive stance.

In a statement, the CTIA said that health was 'important' to its members and that people should 'consult the experts'.

It's a bold move when some of

the companies that dominate the cellphone landscape are based in California.

The question is whether or not the advisory will make a difference.

Without a definitive link between phone use and health issues, the statement may not carry much weight.

And let's face it, telling people to stop using smartphones as they normally do (especially in California) is like telling them to stop breathing.

There would have to be a clear risk to make everyone give up devices that have quickly become staples of modern life.

## Vitamin deficiency in later life

One in two persons aged 65 and above has suboptimal levels of vitamin D in the blood. This is the conclusion of an investigation conducted by researchers at the Helmholtz Zentrum München, as part of the population-based KORA-Age study in the region of Augsburg, sciencedaily.com wrote.

Moreover, as the authors of the study report in the peer-reviewed journal *Nutrients*, one in four older adults has suboptimal vitamin B<sub>12</sub> levels.

Since more than 30 years, the KORA Cooperative Health Research platform has been examining the health of thousands of people living in the greater Augsburg area in Southern Germany.

The aim of the study is to understand the impact of environmental factors, lifestyle factors and genes on health.

Study leader Dr. Barbara Thorand of the Institute of Epidemiology (EPI), Helmholtz Zentrum München, said, "In this context, we were also interested in examining the micronutrient status of older adults, including vitamins."

"So far, in Germany, research data on this topic has been relatively thin on the ground."

Overall, the scientists examined blood samples of 1,079 older adults, aged 65 to 93 years from the KORA study.

Their analysis focused on levels of four micronutrients: Vitamin D, folate, vitamin B<sub>12</sub> and iron.

First author Romy Konzade said, "The results are very clear."

"Fifty-two percent of the examined older adults had vitamin D levels below 50 nmol/L and thus had a suboptimal vitamin D status."

The scientists also observed shortages with regard to some of the other micronutrients.

Notably, twenty-seven percent of older adults had vitamin B<sub>12</sub> levels below the cut-off. Moreover, in eleven percent of older adults, iron levels were too low, and almost nine percent did not have enough folate in their blood.

EPI director Professor Annette Peters puts the data into context: "By means of blood analyses, the current study has confirmed the critical results of the last German National Nutrition Survey (NVS II), which revealed an insufficient intake of micronutrients from foods."

"This is a highly relevant issue, particularly in light of our growing aging population."

### Are dietary supplements the way forward?

The majority of older adults with suboptimal vitamin levels had in common that they were very old, physically inactive or frail.

Special attention should, therefore, be paid to these groups with a higher risk for micronutrient deficiencies, explained the researchers.

Barbara Thorand said, "Our study also shows that regular intake of vitamin-containing supplements goes along with improved levels of the respective vitamins."

"However, vitamin-containing supplements are not a universal remedy, and particularly older people should watch out for maintaining a healthy and nutritious diet."

In this context, the authors said their next objective is to continue investigating the metabolic pathways that link supplement intake, micronutrient status and disease states.



healthline.com

Slimming World has come under fire after making changes to its diet plan. A top nutritionist said the program will 'damage our relationship with what we eat'.

Dieters following Slimming World's regime are allowed certain 'free' foods, and everything else has to be counted in a tally of 'Syns', according to independent.co.uk.

Until now, 'free' foods included various pasta and noodle meals and snacks.

However a change to the plan has been announced, meaning foods that were previously 'free' have to be part of the Syns tally.

A Slimming World spokesperson said, "We frequently review the products

## Slimming World 'Syns' diet plan criticized for encouraging food guilt

we hold on our food databases.

"As part of this process, we've recently taken a closer look at the ever-growing range of pasta and noodle snack pots and sachets that are now readily available, and decided that these are not filling and satisfying enough to be classified as Free Food on our Food Optimizing eating plan."

"As a result, and to protect our members' weight losses, some products that were previously free will now have



independent.co.uk

a small Syn value — of between half Syn and three Syns.

"Plain dried pasta and noodles are still classed as Free Food — alongside hundreds of other everyday foods — and because the new Syn values for pasta and noodle snack pots and sachets are still so low they can easily be included within a member's daily choices, if that's what they want to do. Slimming World has no plans to develop an equivalent product."

Many Slimming World members haven't reacted well to the change, and one nutritionist has spoken out to explain why she doesn't think the program is advisable.

Leading Harley Street Nutritionist Rhiannon Lambert said, "Naming certain foods as 'Syns' just contributes to an unhealthy anxiety that prevails around food all too often."

"The diet industry just fuels feelings of guilt and shame, it's no wonder we

have an obesity problem and a rise in eating disorders!"

Lambert believes that Slimming World is 'vilifying' certain products and brands, classing foods either as good or bad.

"In doing so we are damaging our relationship with what we eat."

"Those lucky enough to have never strayed into eating disorders or struggled with their weight may not see it this way but for the ones who are supposed to benefit most from this Slimming World system, those who eat too much or not enough, labelling foods is a negative and guilt-ridden idea."

"We should encourage positive messages surrounding what we can and should eat, not what we can't and shouldn't eat."

Lambert, whose book *Re-Nourish* is published on 28 December 2017, is concerned that the system of Syns and 'free' foods will encourage people to obsess over food.

"An obsession over which foods are good and bad has an impossible, rule-driven way of eating that is familiar to so many eating disordered people, a behavior that I see in my clinic every single day."

"Diet culture is seen everywhere from restaurant menus to supermarkets and I believe that if we perceive what we eat as good or bad, it is often an extension of how we perceive ourselves."

In response to Lambert's comments, a spokesperson for Slimming World said, "The 'y' in the word Syns is of particular importance and refers to the synergy between the three parts of Slimming World's eating plan — Free Food, Healthy Extras and Syns — which together empower people to lose weight without hunger, deprivation or guilt."

"Instead of counting calories or fat, with our plan members can satisfy their appetite on Free Food choices that are low in energy and filling."

"Free Food includes a long list of hundreds of everyday foods like fruit and veg, pasta, rice, potatoes, lean meat, fish and more."

All foods that aren't Free have a Syn value and Syns are the way our members can enjoy the foods that many diets ban without a shred of guilt."

"Far from making people feel ashamed about what they eat, our plan is about lifting the burden of guilt people feel around food and providing a healthy, flexible and realistic way of eating that fits with every lifestyle and that can be kept up for the long-term."

## Living near a gym may help with weight maintenance

When it comes to staying fit, research suggested it really is about location, location, location.

In a new British study, middle-aged adults and seniors who had homes close to gyms and other exercise facilities tended to be trimmer than those who didn't, UPI reported.

By the same token, those who didn't live near fast-food restaurants also tended

to be trimmer than those who did not, research suggested it really is about location, location, location.

The study did not include proximity to other types of facilities, such as public parks or cycling and walking paths.

The study team found that, on average, most people lived within one kilometer (a bit more than half a mile) from a single exercise facility. However, one-third of the participants did not.

In the end, the researchers determined that those who had the best access to a nearby exercise facility were less overweight than those who had poor access.

Specifically, living near a minimum of six such facilities translated into having about a half-inch smaller waist, about a half-point lower BMI reading and less body fat.

That said, the link between being trimmer and facility proximity was more apparent among women and wealthier residents. And the study did not prove that proximity caused people to be trimmer.

The research team also observed that, on average, study participants lived just over two-thirds of a mile from a fast-food outlet. But nearly 20 percent lived about one-third of a mile from the nearest such establishment.

The researchers concluded that those who lived over a mile away from a fast-food restaurant were likely to be slightly trimmer than those who lived closest. This finding again appeared to apply more strongly to women than men.

The report was published in *The Lancet Public Health*.



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